

N-MUSD Brings Home the Gold

The California Department of Education (CDE) awarded twelve elementary schools in Newport-Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) with the California Gold Ribbon Award, in recognition of their outstanding educational programs and practices that contribute to closing the achievement gap.

The Gold Ribbon program replaces the California Distinguished Schools program during the two years that California is developing new assessment and accountability systems. The California Gold Ribbon Schools Award was created to honor schools while the California Distinguished Schools Program is on hiatus as California transitions to new assessment and accountability systems. Traditionally, the Distinguished Schools Program honored public schools that showed improved student outcomes as measured through standardized testing and reporting scores and additional measures.

The Gold Ribbon program is different from the California Distinguished Schools program in that it focuses on recognizing schools that demonstrate academic progress through the implementation of the new State standards.

The seven NMUSD schools in Costa Mesa that were honored with the California Gold Ribbon Award are:

Davis Magnet School

Davis Magnet School was recognized as a Gold Ribbon School for their success in closing the achievement gap, engaging parents and community and use of technology through their project based learning, which focuses on improving achievement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

Sample project based learning at Davis Magnet School include a rollercoaster challenge, where students create a rollercoaster to learn about motion and force; develop a bio-waste digester,

which teaches students about waste matter, renewable energy, chemistry and more. The project based approach to learning has resulted in 75 percent of Davis students meeting or exceeded English language arts standards and 74 percent meeting or exceeded math standards, based on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium data. These percentages are 39 to 125 percent higher than district, county, and state averages. Learn more about Davis Magnet School at <http://davismagnet.nmusd.us>.

Kaiser Elementary

Kaiser Elementary uniquely serves students in grades three through six and was selected as a Gold Ribbon School for their success implementing their Read All Day (RAD) Program. The RAD program includes various tiers of instruction, grounded on new state standards, student assessments to determine the tier of instruction that best suits each student's need, and creating a community culture of reading.

The RAD program has resulted in a 24 percent increase in student reading proficiency. Based on 2015 Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium data, English learners exceed state averages by nine percent, socio-economically disadvantaged students exceed state averages by 11 percent and special education students exceed state standards by 18 percent. To learn more about Kaiser Elementary please visit <http://kaiser.nmusd.us>.

Killybrooke Elementary

Killybrooke Elementary School was recognized as a Gold Ribbon School for their success in implementing a college and career readiness program centered on universal achievement (as a No Excuses University school) and technology integration.

Killybrooke has made great strides in increasing achievement of all students and closing the achievement gap for English Learners and socio-economically disadvantaged students,

through six systems designed to help all students achieve, with technology (including 1:1 Chromebooks for students in grades 3-6) used as a tool to maximize student learning.

Assessments show improvement, with Academic Performance Index increasing from 667 to 867, English language arts proficiency increasing from 27 percent to 67 percent, and math proficiency increasing from 31 percent to 75 percent. Student scores exceed County and State averages. Learn more about Killybrooke Elementary at <http://killybrooke.nmusd.us>.

Paularino Elementary

Paularino Elementary School was recognized as a Gold Ribbon School for their success in creating a culture of universal achievement through their program, Reading Our Way to College. Paularino Elementary became a No Excuses University school to inspire students to attend college and also implemented an Accelerated Reader program to encourage students to read independently.

Implementation of these reading programs and other programs, focused on improving students' character virtues- such as fairness, responsibility, respect, caring, trustworthiness and good citizenship- have resulted in a 21 percent decline in the number of students reading two or more years below grade level. To learn more about Paularino Elementary please visit <http://paularino.nmusd.us>.

Pomona Elementary

Pomona Elementary School was recognized as a Gold Ribbon School for their reading instruction program, which uses small group dynamics to deliver adaptive reading instruction for students to achieve academic success. Students that require intensive intervention are placed in groups as small as two, while students who have mastered grade level foundational skills receive teacher support to move beyond grade level expectations.

The reading program, which is flexible and adjusted throughout the year, has resulted in ten percent more students scoring at benchmark reading levels. STAR testing data showed an 18 percent drop in students reading two or more years below grade level. Learn more about Pomona Elementary at <http://pomona.nmusd.us>.

Sonora Elementary

Sonora Elementary School was recognized as a Gold Ribbon School for their No Excuses University: We are College Bound program.

The We are College Bound program is designed to close the achievement gap between students in traditionally low-achieving sub-groups by implementing continuous data assessments to develop individualized academic intervention plans and address social-emotional and behavioral needs of students.

Sonora Elementary has twice been named a California Distinguished School and a Title 1 Achieving School. Learn more about Sonora Elementary at <http://sonora.nmusd.us>.

Early College High School

In 2015, the first year of the California Gold Ribbon Program, the California Department of Education recognized NMUSD's Early College High School (ECHS) with a Gold Ribbon Award. ECHS partners with Coastline Community College to offer students the opportunity to earn both a high school diploma and a year or more of transferable college credit.

With a 100 percent graduation rate, ECHS offers smaller classes, on-campus college classes, dual-credit classes, easier transition to higher education and financial savings of completing college credits in high school.

ECHS is top ten ranking among all public high schools Orange

County and has the highest California Department of Education rating of 10/10, for seven consecutive years. Learn more about ECHS at <http://earlycollege.nmusd.us>.